



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

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# Expanding Access, Increasing Opportunity, Building Connections – Toronto Public Library’s Strategic Plan 2016-2019

<b>Date:</b>	November 30, 2015
<b>To:</b>	Strategic Planning Steering Committee
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

### **SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the priority areas, outcomes and key 2016 activities for Toronto Public Library’s Strategic Plan 2016-2019 with a summary of the results of public consultation. The priority areas describe where the Library will invest in our digital platforms, public space, collections and people, to create greater impact for residents and communities in Toronto.

To develop the plan, Toronto Public Library (TPL) conducted a detailed environmental scan and extensive public consultation beginning in April and continuing throughout December. To date, over 1,900 residents, stakeholders, and community partners have participated in the process, along with over 300 staff members and Union representatives.

As a result of this research and consultation, the six priority areas of the new plan are:

1. Advancing Our Digital Platforms;
2. Breaking Down Barriers to Access, Driving Inclusion;
3. Expanding Access to Technology and Training;
4. Establishing TPL as Toronto’s Centre for Continuous and Self-Directed Learning;
5. Creating Community Connections through Cultural Experiences;
6. Transforming for 21st Century Service Excellence.

The new strategic plan builds on TPL’s service strengths. The Strategic Plan harnesses the potential of new technologies and innovation to create greater awareness, access, and use of library services at the customer’s point of need. New offerings will include mobile and personalized services that enhance the user experience online.

The priorities align and support City strategies and directions, including TO Prosperity, Toronto’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, Toronto’s Strong Neighbourhoods 2020, the Seniors Strategy, Youth Equity Strategy and the Toronto Middle Childhood Strategy.

Key activities for 2016 with sample indicators have been identified for each of the priority areas. Transparency and accountability will be supported through regular reporting of the Library's overall results as well as progress on key activities and outcomes for the strategic plan. Next steps include creating a public-facing version of the plan; developing a communication strategy to inform residents, stakeholders, partners and funders; and incorporating the plan into the operating and budget submissions and the Toronto Public Library's Fundraising Priorities for future years.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**The City Librarian recommends that the Strategic Planning Steering Committee:**

1. receives the update on the consultation process to date for information as outlined in Attachment 1;
2. recommends the draft priorities, goals and outcomes to the Toronto Public Library Board for approval in December 2015 as outlined in Attachment 2;
3. recommends the draft key activities for 2016 and indicators to the Toronto Public Library Board for approval in December 2015 as outlined in Attachment 3; and
4. directs staff to create a public-facing version of the strategic plan and a communication plan for Toronto Public Library Board approval in January 2016.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The costs of creating the strategic plan have been provided for in the 2015 operating budget. Activities requiring additional funding have been included in the 2016 operating and capital budget submission.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

At its April 20, 2015 meeting, the Library Board approved the report *Creating a New Strategic Plan: 2016 – 2019*. <http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2015/apr20/14.pdf>

At its June 22, 2015 meeting, the Library Board approved the report *Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019: Draft Priorities and Consultation Plan*. <http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/about-the-library/board/meetings/2015-jun-22.jsp>

At its October 26, 2015 meeting, the Library Board approved the report *Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019: Draft Priorities, Outcomes and Results of Public Consultation to Date*.  
<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2015/oct26/10b-spsc-strat-plan-2016-2019-draft-priorities-outcomes-results.pdf>

## COMMENTS

Staff have prepared a strategic plan in accordance with the consultation process and strategy approved by the Library Board in June 2015.

### Key themes of public consultation

Implementing the consultation plan, library staff conducted extensive consultation for the strategic plan as outlined in Attachment 1. Public consultation included a range of tactics and activities to ensure that residents, stakeholders, community partners, library staff and the Toronto Public Library Workers Union 4948 had opportunities to participate throughout the process. Emphasis was placed on reaching library users and non-users. Participants in the process were representative of diverse populations and age groups. In September, a survey of Toronto residents was conducted on the Toronto Public Library website, and in November, Forum Research conducted a hybrid telephone/web survey, results of which will be presented to the Library Board in December. There were numerous branch and community consultation events in TSNS 2020 neighbourhoods and library branches throughout the city.

### Key ideas and themes that emerged during public consultation inform the priority areas of the strategic plan and include:

- **Enhanced digital service offerings**, with more personalized service options across traditional and new service channels
- **Equitable access to current and emerging technology**, including in-branch computers, bandwidth, WiFi, 3D printers, specialized hardware and software
- Easier and more convenient, **barrier-free access** to services and resources for branch and virtual users
- Expanded **open hours** that are responsive to the needs of users of all ages
- Taking the Library to the people, through **outreach and self-service options** in the community and online
- The Library as **community hub**, uniting neighbourhoods, offering opportunities for partnership, civic engagement, and citizen participation
- **Increased awareness of service offerings** available online and in branch, communicated on users' channel of choice
- **Diverse collections** in digital and physical formats, reflective of community needs and interests
- **Continuous lifelong learning** opportunities to support and enrich personal goals and development
- Access to programs and activities to enhance **diverse cultural experiences**, equitably available across branches and communities
- Endorsement of the Library's key role in promoting **multiple literacies** to foster inclusion and participation

These ideas and themes were expressed throughout the consultation process and were generally consistent across the various groups that participated.

## **Priority Areas for 2016-2019**

Based on input received during the consultation process from residents and stakeholders, draft priorities were created, refined and focused. All priorities were developed to respond to issues, needs and trends identified through the environmental scan and consultation as critical to the well-being and success of Torontonians in the global knowledge economy. The priorities for the Strategic Plan 2016-2019, pending approval by the Library Board, are summarized below and included in Attachment 2.

### **PRIORITY #1: Advancing Our Digital Platforms**

We will be a model of excellence in digital service delivery in the public sector, with digital platforms that offer a full range of services to Toronto communities and residents, and deliver exceptional customer experiences at every point of need.

### **PRIORITY #2: Breaking Down Barriers to Access, Driving Inclusion**

We will break down barriers to access so that Torontonians from all walks of life have easy, local access to library services they want and need.

### **PRIORITY #3: Expanding Access to Technology and Training**

We will provide access to current and emerging technology, training and expertise to promote digital literacy and inclusion.

### **PRIORITY #4: Establishing TPL as Toronto's Centre for Continuous and Self-Directed Learning**

We will be the institution of choice for continuous, lifelong and self-directed learning, where Torontonians of all ages and at all stages can extend and enhance their education and access to information, both online and in neighbourhoods across the city.

### **PRIORITY #5: Creating Community Connections through Cultural Experiences**

We will provide access to a range of local and city-wide cultural experiences that engage residents and help them feel connected to their community.

### **PRIORITY #6: Transforming for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Service Excellence**

We will transform the Library's capacity and culture to deliver exceptional customer experiences how, when and where our customers want and need them. Torontonians will benefit from a vibrant, revitalized, digitally-enabled, and efficiently-managed service.

## **Key Activities for 2016**

To ensure that the Library progresses on the Strategic Plan, work in November focused on refining the outcomes and indicators and developing prioritized activities for 2016 as outlined in Attachment 3. Performance measures for 2015, and the results of the public residents survey, which will be reported to the Library Board in December, will help establish and refine indicators and targets for 2016 and future years.

## **Communication for the Strategic Plan**

Upon Board approval of the plan scheduled for December, it is proposed that library staff develop a public version and communication plan to engage residents, communities,

stakeholders, partners and funders in understanding the Library's priorities and in achieving results.

### **Supporting Transparency and Accountability**

Quarterly and annual reporting on the Library's key performance measures and strategic actions and outcomes will support transparency and accountability in achieving results. Outcomes include both quantitative and qualitative measures to ensure that library services are relevant, efficient and of high quality. In addition, the capital and operating budgets for 2017-2019, policies and service proposals before the Library Board will include a statement of how they align and support the Library's strategic priorities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The creation of a new strategic plan is a critical strategy in delivering library services that reflect the changing needs of Toronto residents. Successful implementation of the plan will transform service delivery, build support and usage, and achieve the vision of making Toronto's residents and communities *more connected and more successful*.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Summary of Consultation  
Attachment 2: Vision, Mission, Draft Priority Areas, Goals and Outcomes  
Attachment 3: Draft 2016 Key Activities and Indicators